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來函檔號 Your Ref:

Date: 26th March 1984

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UT 5542

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
House of Commons,
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Dear Prime Minister,

The Future of Hong Kong

As you are aware HMG and the Chinese Government have been engaged in negotiations over Hong Kong's future since the Prime Minister's visit to China in September 1982. Hong Kong may be small in size, but it is a major economic force in the world, and the outcome of the negotiations will not only affect the lives of the 5.3 million people who live here, but may also have a significant impact on the world economy.

So far, there have been 11 rounds of negotiations, spread over the past 18 months, and they have been conducted in the strictest confidence. On 14th March the Hong Kong Legislative Council held a debate on a Motion that any proposals for the future of Hong Kong should be debated in that Council before any final agreement is reached.

The attached Hansard, from page 22 to 78, reports the debate in full. Twenty-two Unofficial Members participated and the Chief Secretary spoke on behalf of the Official Members. The Motion was carried unanimously. For your convenience, some of the key points expressed in the course of the debate are
---- summarised in the paper appended to this letter.

If you would like further information or clarification of any point please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

S.Y. CHUNG
Senior Unofficial Member
of the Executive Council,
Hong Kong

R.H. Lobo
Senior Unofficial Member
of the Legislative Council,
Hong Kong

Debate on Hong Kong's Future in the
Hong Kong Legislative Council on 14th March 1984

Some key points expressed in the course of the debate are summarised below:-

1. Hong Kong people must be told without further delay the direction in which the talks are heading, and should debate and discuss their views on the future freely. How can proposals which affect the destiny of Hong Kong people be made without their participation and contribution? Public opinion must be informed in order to be effective. Some Hong Kong people fear they may be presented with a fait accompli.
2. Given that HMG has undertaken to reach an agreement which will be acceptable to the people of Hong Kong, as well as to the Governments of China and Britain; how is acceptability to Hong Kong people to be tested? The views of Hong Kong people must be obtained before any agreement is set in concrete. Adequate time is needed for debate. Any appearance of rushing an agreement through would psychologically damage the credibility of the British Government even if the agreement itself was quite reasonable.
3. Hong Kong people are being asked to believe that under a Chinese administration their way of life and institutions would not change. But the systems of Hong Kong and China are fundamentally different. China's recent history has not been stable and is not reassuring. Furthermore, there is no known precedent for one country to operate successfully two totally opposite systems at the same time and no one knows whether it will work. This is one of the many major fears of Hong Kong people.
4. The great majority of Hong Kong people wish to maintain their existing life-style, social, legal and economic systems. Personal freedom is the right Hong Kong people value most highly. The acceptability of any proposed settlement lies in whether people believe that its terms will be respected and will endure. Faith cannot be created by orders; trust cannot be induced by the exercise of power; and no settlement which fails to engender trust can possibly preserve Hong Kong's stability and prosperity.
5. Of Hong Kong's present population of 5.3 million people, some 60% are British by birth or naturalisation. Since the passing of the British

Nationality Act in 1981, they have the status of British Dependent Territories Citizens. They do not have a right of abode in England, but they are British nationals and are entitled to British protection. Whatever happens after 1997 the British Government must retain responsibility for these people. Should they find life in Hong Kong after 1997 intolerable they should be able to leave Hong Kong and settle abroad with assistance from the British Government.

6. The Legislative Council of Hong Kong is an important forum for public debate and must play a part in reflecting opinion in Hong Kong, in advance of any proposed agreement being put to the U.K. Parliament. No representative status is claimed for the Council, but the Unofficial Members are drawn from a wide spectrum of local society. Outside the Council they work on over 300 committees and boards in many fields of public service activity, and their business and social contacts touch on all sectors of the community. Moreover, since the talks commenced, they have received individually and through the UMELCO Office many representations on the future.
7. The Chief Secretary acknowledged the important role of the Legislative Council in reflecting the views of Hong Kong people and could not see any objection to the Council having the opportunity to debate any settlement proposed for Hong Kong's future before any final agreement is reached. It would be inconceivable in his view that Parliament would not wish to know, when the time comes for endorsing the agreement, what views had been expressed in the Legislative Council.

Hong Kong: Future Pt 12.



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From the Private Secretary

2 April 1984

HONG KONG

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from Sir S. Y. Chung and Mr. R. H. Lobo about the Debate on 14 March in the Hong Kong Legislative Council, together with a copy of the summary of the key points which the writers enclosed with their letter.

I should be grateful if your briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with the Unofficials on 6 April could draw attention to this letter since I imagine that the delegation may well refer to it.

I have sent a simple acknowledgement to Sir S. Y. Chung and Mr. Lobo.

A JC

Peter Ricketts Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Lee Ke

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To the Private Secretary

2 April 1984

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 26 March about the Debate on 14 March in the Hong Kong Legislative Council. The Prime Minister is looking forward to further discussion with you at the end of this week.

AJC

Sir S. Y. Chung and Mr. R. H. Lobo.